

Greatest Of All Times

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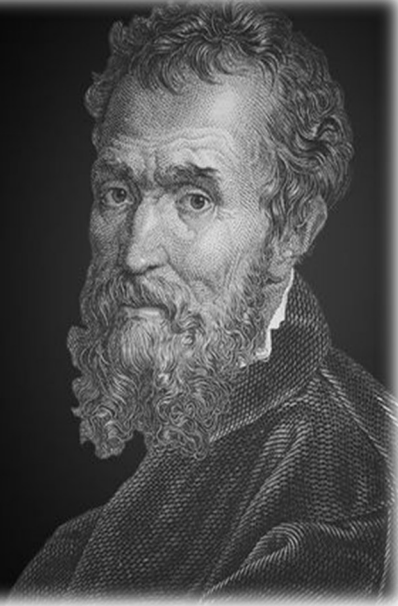
**G
O
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**Globally selected
PERSONALITIES**

I saw the **angel**
in the marble and carved
until I set him free.

– *Michelangelo*

AZ QUOTES



6 Mar 1475 <::><::><::> **18 Feb 1564**

Compiled by:
Prof Dr S Ramalingam
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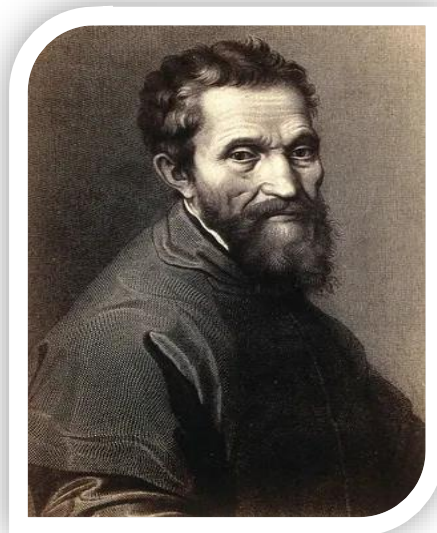
6 Mar 1475



18 Feb 1564

Michelangelo

https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/michelangelo.shtml



Michelangelo was a painter, sculptor, architect and poet and one of the great artists of the Italian Renaissance.

Michelangelo Buonarroti was born on 6 March 1475 in Caprese near Florence (Italy) where his father was the local magistrate. A few weeks after his birth, the family moved to Florence. In 1488, Michelangelo was apprenticed to the painter Domenico Ghirlandaio. He then lived in the household of Lorenzo de' Medici, the leading patron of the arts in Florence.

After the Medici were expelled from Florence, Michelangelo travelled to Bologna and then, in 1496, to Rome. His primary works were sculpture in these early years. His 'Pietà' (1497) made his name and he returned

to Florence a famous sculptor. Here he produced his 'David' (1501-1504).

In 1505, Pope Julius II summoned Michelangelo back to Rome and commissioned him to design Julius' own tomb. Due to quarrels between Julius and Michelangelo, and the many other demands on the artist's time, the project was never completed, although Michelangelo did produce a sculpture of Moses for the tomb.

Michelangelo's next major commission was the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican (1508-1512). It was recognised at once as a great work of art and from then on Michelangelo was regarded as Italy's greatest living artist.

The new pope, Leo X, then commissioned Michelangelo to rebuild the façade of the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. The scheme was eventually abandoned, but it marks the beginning of Michelangelo's activity as an architect. Michelangelo also designed monuments to Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici in the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo.

In 1534, Michelangelo returned to Rome where he was commissioned to paint 'The Last Judgement' on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel (1537-1541). From 1546 he was increasingly active as an architect, in particular on the great church of St Peter's. He died in Rome on 18 February 1564.

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Sistine Chapel Ceiling

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sistine_Chapel_ceiling

The **Sistine Chapel ceiling** (*Italian*: *Soffitto della Cappella Sistina*), painted in fresco by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512, is a cornerstone work of High Renaissance art.

The Sistine Chapel is the large papal chapel built within the Vatican between 1477 and 1480 by Pope Sixtus IV, for whom the chapel is named. The ceiling was painted at the commission of Pope Julius II.

The ceiling's various painted elements form part of a larger scheme of decoration within the chapel. Prior to Michelangelo's contribution, the walls were painted by several leading artists of the late 15th century including Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Pietro Perugino. After the ceiling was painted, Raphael created a set of large tapestries (1515–1516) to cover the lower portion of the wall. Michelangelo returned to the chapel to create The Last Judgment, a large wall fresco situated behind the altar.

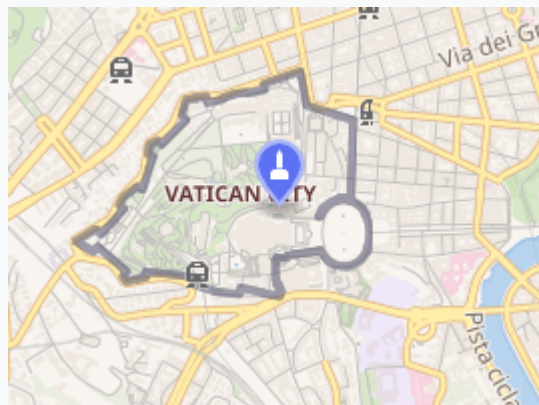
The chapel's decoration illustrates much of the doctrine of the [Catholic Church](#), serving as the location for [papal conclaves](#) and many other important services.

Central to the ceiling decoration are nine scenes from the [Book of Genesis](#), including [The Creation of Adam](#). The complex design includes several sets of figures, some clothed and some [nude](#), allowing Michelangelo to demonstrate his skill in depicting the human figure in a variety of poses. The ceiling was immediately well-received and imitated by other artists, continuing to the present. It has been [restored several times](#), most recently from 1980 to 1994.

Sistine Chapel Ceiling



The interior of the [Sistine Chapel](#) showing the ceiling in relation to the other frescoes. Michelangelo's [The Creation of Adam](#) is near the top of the photo.



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Click on the map for a fullscreen view

Artist [Michelangelo](#)

Location [Sistine Chapel](#), part of [Vatican Museums](#), [Vatican City](#)

 [41°54'11"N 12°27'16"E](#)

Followed by [The Last Judgment](#)



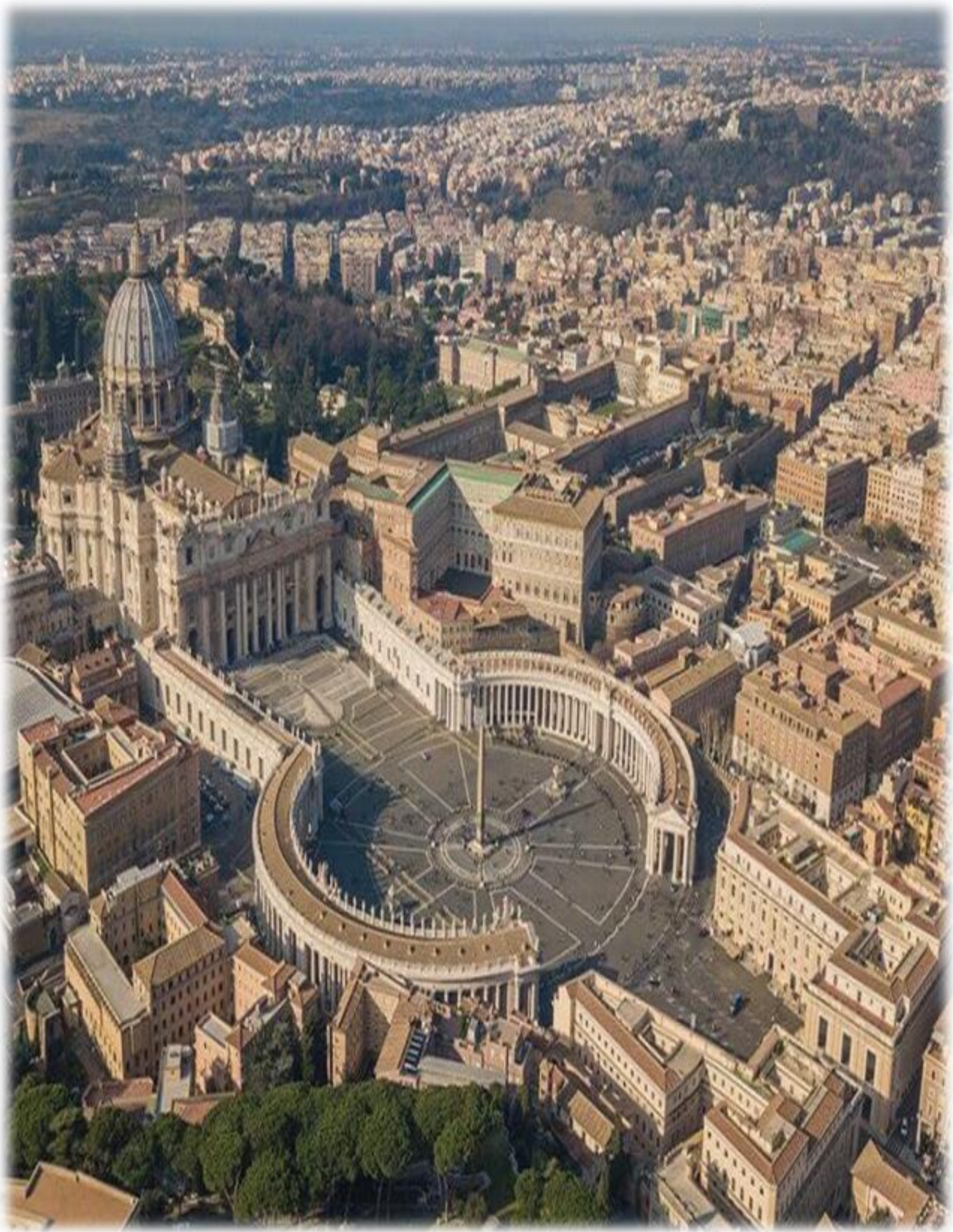


Photo of Sistine Chapel

NINE SCENES

Book of Genesis

Along the central section of the ceiling, Michelangelo depicted nine scenes from the Book of Genesis, organized into three groups of three related scenes. The scenes alternate between smaller and larger pictures, with the former framed by two pairs of *ignudi* flanking a medallion. The first group depicts God creating the Heavens and the Earth. The second group shows God creating the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and their disobedience of God and consequent expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The third group shows the plight of humanity and in particular the family of Noah.



Separation of Light from Darkness



Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Plants



Separation of Land and Water

The pictures within the three groups link to one another, in the same way as was usual in Mediaeval paintings and stained glass. The nine scenes are oriented to be viewed while facing the altar, chronologically unfolding towards the chapel entrance (except for the second and third scenes, and the seventh and eighth, which are each transposed). John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke suggest that this reversed progression symbolises a return to a state of grace. The scenes, from the altar towards the main door, are as follows:

1. The Separation of Light from Darkness

2. *The Creation of the Sun, Moon and Plants*

3. *The Separation of Land and Water*

4. *The Creation of Adam*

5. *The Creation of Eve*

6. *The Fall and Expulsion*

7. *The Sacrifice of Noah*

8. *The Great Flood*

9. *The Drunkenness of Noah*

Creation

The three creation pictures show scenes from the first chapter of Genesis, which relates that God created the Earth and its inhabitants in six days, resting on the seventh day. In the first scene, the *First Day of Creation*, God creates light and separates light from darkness. Chronologically, the next scene takes place in the third panel, in which, on the *Second Day*, God divides the waters from the heavens. In the central scene, the largest of the three, there are two representations of God: on the *Third Day*, God creates the Earth and makes it sprout plants; on the *Fourth Day*, God puts the Sun and the Moon in place to govern the night and the day, the time and the seasons of the year.

These three scenes, completed in the third stage of painting, are the most broadly conceived, the most broadly painted and the most dynamic of all the pictures. Of the first scene Vasari says, "Michelangelo depicted God dividing the light from the darkness ... where He is seen in all His majesty as He sustains Himself alone with open arms in a demonstration of love and creative energy."



Creation of Adam



Creation of Eve



The Fall and Expulsion from Paradise

Adam and Eve

For the central section of the ceiling, Michelangelo took four episodes from the story of Adam and Eve as told in the first, second and third chapters of Genesis. In this sequence of three, two of the panels are large and one small.

In the first of the pictures, one of the most widely recognized images in the history of painting, Michelangelo shows God reaching out to touch Adam. Vasari describes Adam as "a figure whose beauty, pose, and contours are of such a quality that he seems newly created by his Supreme and First Creator rather than by the brush and design of a mere mortal." From beneath the sheltering arm of God, Eve looks out somewhat apprehensively. Correspondingly, Adam reaches out to the creator, who Walter Pater states "comes with the forms of things to be, woman and her progeny, in the fold of his garment". Pater wrote of the depiction of Adam in the *Creation*:

Fair as the young men of the Elgin marbles, the Adam of the Sistine Chapel is unlike them in a total absence of that balance and completeness which express so well the sentiment of a self-contained, independent life. In that languid figure there is something rude and satyr-like, something akin to the rugged hillside on which it lies. His whole form is gathered into an expression of mere expectation and reception; he has hardly strength enough to lift his finger to touch the finger of the creator; yet a touch of the finger-tips will suffice.

The central scene, of God creating Eve from the side of the sleeping Adam^[Fig 5] has been taken in its composition directly from another creation sequence, the relief panels that surround the door of the Basilica of San Petronio, Bologna, by Jacopo della Quercia, whose work Michelangelo had studied in his youth. In the final panel of this sequence, Michelangelo combines two contrasting scenes into one panel, that of Adam and Eve taking fruit from the forbidden tree (a fig and not an apple tree as commonly depicted in Western Christian art), Eve trustingly taking it from the hand of the Serpent (depicted as Lilith) and Adam eagerly picking it for himself, as well as their banishment from the Garden of Eden, where they have lived in the company of God, to the world outside where they have to fend for themselves and experience death.

Noah

As with the first sequence of pictures, the three panels concerning Noah, taken from the sixth to ninth chapters of Genesis are thematic rather than chronological. In the first scene is shown the sacrifice of a sheep. Both Vasari and Condivi mistake this scene for the sacrifices by Cain and Abel, in which Abel's sacrifice was acceptable to God and Cain's was not. What this image almost certainly depicts is the sacrifice made by the family of Noah, after their safe deliverance from the Great Flood which destroyed the rest of humanity.

The central, larger, scene shows the Great Flood. The Ark in which Noah's family escaped floats at the rear of the picture while the rest of humanity tries frantically to scramble to some point of safety. A lightning bolt, which according to Condivi illustrated God's wrath, was smitten from the ceiling when the chapel was damaged in 1797.



Sacrifice of Noah



The Flood

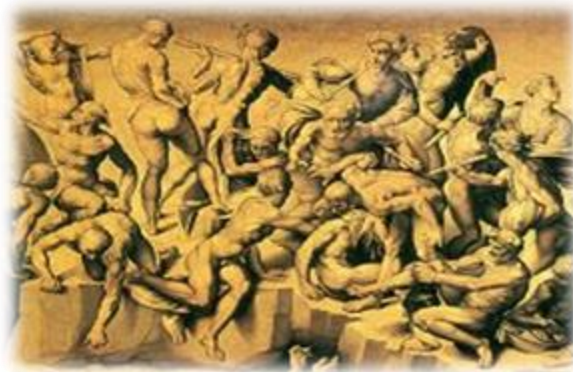


Drunkenness of Noah

The final scene is the story of Noah's drunkenness. After the Flood, Noah tills the soil and grows vines. He is shown doing so in the background of the picture. He becomes drunk and inadvertently exposes himself. His youngest son, Ham, brings his two brothers Shem and Japheth to see the sight but they discreetly cover their father with a cloak. Ham is later cursed by Noah and told that the descendants of Ham's son Canaan will serve Shem and Japheth's descendants forever.

Since Michelangelo executed the nine biblical scenes in reverse chronological order, some analyses of the frescoes of the vault commence with the *Drunkenness of Noah*. Charles de Tolnay's neo platonic interpretation sees the story of Noah at the beginning and the act of creation by God as the conclusion of the process of *deificatio* and the return from physical to spiritual being.

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The Battle of Cascina

Michelangelo

Sculptures and Life

<https://www.michelangelo.org/>

Michelangelo was without doubt one of the most inspirational and talented artists in modern history. During his life, the western world underwent what was perhaps the most remarkable period of change since the decline of the Roman Empire. The Renaissance saw changes in all aspects of life and culture, with dramatic reforms sweeping through the worlds of religion, politics, and scientific belief. Michelangelo was one of the most fervent advocates of this exciting new philosophy, working with a remarkable energy that was mirrored by contemporary society. One of the leading lights of the Italian Renaissance, his extraordinary talents emerged in early works such as the [Pietà](#) for the Vatican, and the statue of [David](#) commissioned for the city of Florence. His paintings and frescoes were largely taken from mythological and classical sources works. He manages to combine his high level of technical competence and his rich artistic imagination to produce the perfect High-Renaissance blend of aesthetic harmony and anatomical accuracy in his works.

Michelangelo was born on March 6, 1475 in Caprese near Arezzo, Tuscany. He was the first artist who was recognized during his lifetime. He is also the first western artist whose biography was published when he is still alive. Two biographies for him was written, one was by Giorgio Vasari, who praised Michelangelo as the greatest artist since the beginning of the renaissance. He is the best-documented artist in 16th Century and has influenced so many areas of art development in the West. Together with [Leonardo da Vinci](#), the two stood out as strong and mighty-personalities with two irreconcilably opposed attitudes to art, yet with a bond of deep understanding between them.

At the age of 6, Michelangelo was sent to a Florence grammar school but he showed no interest in schooling. He would rather watch the painters at nearby churches, and draw what he saw there. His father realized he had no interest in the family's financial business and agreed to send him to the painter Ghirlandaio to be trained as an apprentice. He was 13 years old at the time. In this fashionable Florentine painter's workshop, Michelangelo learned the technique of Fresco and draftsman ship.

Genius is eternal patience." - Michelangelo

Michelangelo spent only a year at the workshop the moved into the palace of Florentine ruler Lorenzo the Magnificent, of the powerful Medici family, to study classical sculpture in the Medici gardens. He studied under famous sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni there and exposed himself to many of the great artists of past centuries, Giotto, Masaccio, [Donatello](#), as well as the masterpiece antiquities of ancient Greece and Rome: works that were held in Medici's vast collection. He also met many living artists, philosophers, writers and thinkers of the day, including Poliziano, Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola. It was while he was with the Medicis that Michelangelo completed his first two commissions as a sculptor: marble reliefs, [Madonna of the Stairs](#), and [Battle of the Centaurs](#). Both amazingly sophisticated and complex works for a teenager. Michelangelo became, during this time, an expert in portraying the human form, drawing from life and studying anatomy. He also obtained special permission from the Catholic

Church to study human corpses to learn anatomy, though exposure to corpses had worsened his health condition.

After the death of Lorenzo de Medici, Michelangelo left the Court and, soon after, the arrival of Savonarola and the expulsion of the Medicis from Florence brought a huge change for the young artist. After a short return to his father's house, Michelangelo left Florence during the political upheaval and, maintaining his links to his patrons, the Medicis, he followed them to Venice, then on to Bologna.

In Bologna, Michelangelo continued his work as a sculptor. He carved three statues for the Shrine of St. Dominic, an angel with a candlestick, and saints, Petronius and Proculus. Continuing to be heavily influenced and inspired by classical antiquities, Michelangelo also became involved in a scheme to pass off one of his sculptures, a marble cupid, as an ancient work. Allegedly, he was told by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de Medici to make it look as though it had been dug up, so he could sell it in Rome. Cardinal Raffaele Riario, who bought the piece, discovered the deception, but was so impressed by the quality of the sculpture that he invited the artist to Rome.

Michelangelo arrived in Rome in 1496 when he was 21 years old. It was while in Rome, in his early twenties, that Michelangelo sculpted [Pietà](#), now in St. Peters in the Vatican, in which the Virgin Mary weeps over the body of Jesus. Michelangelo went to the marble quarry and selected the marble for this exquisite piece himself. It was frequently said that Michelangelo could visualise the finished sculpture just by gazing at a block of stone. He was now a man at the height of his creative powers, and, in 1504, back in Florence, he completed his most famous sculpture, [David](#). David, depicted at the moment he decides to battle Goliath, was a symbol of Florentine freedom. It is said to be a masterpiece of line and form. A committee, including [Leonardo da Vinci](#) and [Sandro Botticelli](#), was created and decided on its placement, in front of the Palazzo Vecchio.

*If people knew how hard I had to work to gain my mastery,
it would not seem so wonderful at all." <<< Michelangelo*

Michelangelo accepted many commissions, sculptures and paintings during his time in Florence, many of which went unfinished when, in 1505, he was called back to Rome to work on a Tomb for Pope Julius II. It was planned to be finished within 5 years but he worked on it (with frequent interruptions) for over forty years, and it seems it was never finished to his satisfaction. Fortunately, Michelangelo also completed some of his best, and most well-known work, during this time, most notably the [fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel](#), which took him four years to finish.

This grand fresco contains over three hundred figures over five hundred square meters of the ceiling. It took Michelangelo four years, lying on his back, to complete this masterful work, which stands even today as a testament to this one man's dedicated and accomplished artistry. The scenes depicted are from the Book of Genesis, the most famous of which is [The Creation of Adam](#). The outstretched hands of God and Adam are an iconic image, perhaps the most widely known and imitated detail from any renaissance piece. Michelangelo, in this work, demonstrated his deep understanding of the human form, and how to depict it in a huge array of different poses.

The complex, twisting figures and vibrant colors of this work, and the sculptures with their writhing forms, played a huge role in the birthing of an entire artistic movement. Mannerism, largely derived from the work of Michelangelo, is a deliberately stylized form

of sophisticated art, in which the human body is idealized. It can be characterized by often complex, and sometimes witty, composition and unnatural use of vibrant colors. Without Michelangelo, the works of later Mannerist artists like, for example, Pontormo and Bronzino, would not exist. [Raphael](#) was also strongly influenced by Michelangelo, as were later ceiling painters in the Baroque period, and many others since. His influence on art over the past centuries cannot be estimated. He is rightly viewed as a genius, and as the archetypal Renaissance man.

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark." <<< Michelangelo

Michelangelo's art has far-reaching historic influence. His world is genetically a two-fold system continually expanding. Measuring his internal development from the [Pieta](#) through [David](#) to [The Last Judgement](#), we view the path of an experience in which each stage provides the foundation for the next, from sculpture to painting, painting to architecture, architecture to the art of poetry. How can we not be moved by this will, anxious to express the new by using traditional means? At the same time we are aware of the power of his influence. First mannerism, then [Johannes Vermeer](#), [Rembrandt](#), [Eugene Delacroix](#), Rodin, [Pollock](#) and [De Kooning](#) found in him a model on which they could base their own creations. But the "divine" Michelangelo is more than that. In the western world, he was the first - [Picasso](#) the last - to regard himself as an absolute and mythic cultural experience. He managed to combine his high level of technical competence and his rich artistic imagination to produce the perfect High Renaissance blend of aesthetic harmony and anatomical accuracy in his work.

Michelangelo dominated his time, the Renaissance. He is part of its myth. Like all mythic creation, he appears with the same vigor, the same impact, the mystery of origins, the comprehension of the moment and the interpretation of final endings. It is hard to imagine a more attentive and ambitious creation on these three points united by the energy of the most universal expression possible of that fulfillment we call destiny.

Just like [William Shakespeare](#) on literature, and [Sigmund Freud](#) on psychology, Michelangelo's impact on art is tremendous. Michelangelo not only outshines all his predecessors; he remains the only great sculptor of the Renaissance at its best. What most Late Renaissance artists lacked was not talent but the ability to use their own eyes and share a vision with either their contemporaries or posterity. Michelangelo's extreme genius left little scope for works that escaped his influence, damning all his contemporaries to settle for aping him. Appreciation of Michelangelo's artistic mastery has endured for centuries, and his name has become synonymous with the best of the Renaissance Art.



The Last Judgement

Chronology

<https://www.michelangelo.org/chronology.jsp>

1475

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI is born on March 6 in Caprese, a village near Florence, during his father's short term as mayor and local magistrate. The family soon returns to Florence. The infant Michelangelo is placed in the care of a foster-mother in a town five miles from Florence. His mother dies when he is six.

1488

He quits school and signs up for an apprenticeship as a painter with Domenico Ghirlandaio.

1489

Michelangelo leaves Ghirlandaio's workshop and starts to study sculpture in the gardens of Lorenzo de' Medici. He lives at the ducal palace for three years in the company of the learned Humanists and sculpts his first works (marble reliefs): [Madonna of the Stairs](#) and [Battle of the Centaurs](#).

1492

Lorenzo de' Medici dies and Michelangelo goes back to live with his impoverished father but soon returns to the Medici palace, invited by Lorenzo's son Piero.

1494-1495

Florence rebels against the leadership of Piero. Michelangelo flees the city, goes to Bologna. There he sculpts three small statues for the tomb of San Domenico: [St Petronius](#), [St Proculus](#) and an [Angel](#).

1496

Back in Florence he sculpts a [Cupid](#) (now lost) and sells it to the art dealer Baldassare del Milanese, who in turn sells it as an antique work to a Roman Cardinal.

1497

Michelangelo moves to Rome. To a banker-client he sells his first important work: the [Bacchus](#) and another Cupid, now lost. He makes his first trip to Carrara for marble.

1498-1499

He sculpts [the Pieta](#) for the French cardinal Jean de Billheres (also called Jean Villier de la Grolaie or Groslaye) but receives no other important commissions for nearly two years.

1501

Cardinal Piccolomini orders 15 statues for the Cathedral of Sienna. Michelangelo finishes four of them, begun by another sculptor, and adds one of his own, the ST. PETER, before abandoning the project.

1502

He returns to Florence, which has become a republic, and receives an order from the local authorities for a bronze David (finished by another artist and sent to France, now lost) and a colossal marble [statue of David](#). The Cathedral Cabildo gives him an order for marble figures of the Twelve Apostles. Only the [St. Matthew](#) is blocked out.

1503

He finishes an easel painting, his only one that has survived, of the Holy Family ([Doni Tondo](#)).

1504

His colossal [David](#) is set up in front of the Palazzo della Signoria or City Hall.

1505

He obtains a commission to paint a fresco ([The Battle of Cascina](#)) for the Council Room of the city of Florence. [Leonardo da Vinci](#) is commissioned to do a fresco on another wall of the Council Chamber. Michelangelo only finishes the cartoons - he never starts to paint the wall. He starts but does not finish two round marble reliefs, called tondi: [the Pitti Tondo](#) and [Taddei Tondo](#).

He finishes a "Madonna with the Christ Child" ([Madonna of Bruges](#), sent to Bruges in 1506).

He is called to Rome to build a tomb for Pope Julius II. Then he spends nine months in Carrara, quarrying marble for it. Back in Rome he begins to block out some of the figures for the great tomb.

1506

He leaves Rome in anger on learning that the Pope has given up the tomb project, and takes refuge in Florence under the protection of its governor, Piero Soderini. In November he goes to Bologna to apologize to the Pope, who pardons him and orders a colossal bronze statue of himself.

1507

Michelangelo spends more than a year modelling and casting the figure, which is finally set up on the facade of San Petronio in 1508. Less than four years later it is melted down to make a cannon.

1508

Pope Julius decides to decorate his uncle's chapel (called the Sistine, after Pope Sixtus IV) and orders Michelangelo to fill the ceiling with frescoes. He protests that he is no painter but the Pope insists and Michelangelo begins to work alone and in great discomfort. He finishes [the Sistine Chapel Ceiling](#) in 1512.

1513

Pope Julius dies. Michelangelo signs a new contract for his tomb with his heirs. He works on the MOSES and the so-called "Slaves": [The Dying Slave](#) and [The Rebellious Slave](#) (now in the Louvre, Paris).

1514

He begins work on a [Risen Christ](#) for the church of Sta. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. It is finished by his helper and unveiled only in 1521.

1515

He goes to Carrara to get marble for the Julius tomb figures.

1516

He signs another contract for the Julius tomb. The Medici, now ruling again in Florence, ask him to design the facade for their family church of San Lorenzo. His design calls for 10 statues.

1517 – 1520

He spends most of the following three years in Carrara and Pietrasanta, quarrying marble for the facade of San Lorenzo and also for the Julius tomb. He signs a contract with the Medici for the facade of San Lorenzo, which now includes 22 statues. This project is suddenly and inexplicably cancelled by Pope Leo, Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici, in 1520. Perhaps about this time Michelangelo began, either for the Julius Tomb or the San Lorenzo facade, a statue called [Victory](#). It was left unfinished in his workshop in Florence. Some scholars date it later, around 1530, like the [Apollo](#), another unfinished work.

1524

He begins to work in the MEDICI CHAPEL and the BIBLIOTECA LAURENZIANA or Laurentian Library. He goes back to Carrara for more marble. Part-time he still devotes to the Julius tomb project.

1527-1528

Florence anticipates an attack by a papal and imperial army and appoints Michelangelo Chief of Fortifications. He has to suspend his work in the Medici Chapel and devote himself to the defense of the city.

1529

Michelangelo flees Florence and is declared a traitor. He returns just before Florence is taken by the imperial forces (1530) and he goes into hiding. The Pope promises him immunity if he continues to work on the Medici Chapel figures. He finishes two of them ([Night](#) and [Dawn](#)) by 1531.

1532

Michelangelo moves to Rome. He signs a new contract with Julius' heirs for a smaller tomb - only six figures. The heirs accuse Michelangelo of shirking his responsibility and of lying about the money he received from Pope Julius for the tomb and he is never able to convince them of his honesty, which nearly drives him to despair. He meets Tommaso de' Cavalieri and dedicates many poems and drawings to him.

1533

Pope Clement asks him to paint the [The Last Judgement](#) on the wall of the Sistine Chapel. Michelangelo returns to Florence for a short stay, then leaves it for the rest of his life. He lets assistants finish the Medici Chapel and the Laurentian Library.

1534

Pope Clement dies and the new Pope (Paul III) orders Michelangelo to stop working on the Julius tomb and paint the [The Last Judgement](#) frescoes above the altar of the Sistine Chapel. He finishes them on October 31, 1541. His friendship with Vittoria Colonna begins and he dedicates many religious drawings and poems to her.

1543

He starts work on the CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL fresco in the the Pauline Chapel.

1545

The Julius Tomb is finally set up in San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome. Most of it is executed by other sculptors according to Michelangelo's plan. He is unsatisfied with the results. The two female figures, RACHEL and LEAH - also called the Active Life and Contemplative Life - are by Michelangelo but finished and polished by helpers.

He finishes the CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL fresco and begins the CRUCIFIXION OF ST. PETER , which he finishes only in 1550.

1546

He begins the [The Deposition](#) for his own tomb.

1547

Pope Paul III appoints him official architect of ST. PETER'S BASILICA. With the help of an assistant he completes a model of the dome in 1561.

1555

In a moment of anger and frustration he mutilates his [The Deposition](#).

1564

His friend Daniele da Volterra watches him work all day February 12 on the [Rondanini Pieta](#). Two days later he comes down with a fever but goes for a walk in the cold night air, saying he just can't rest. The next day he spends sitting next to the fireplace but finally must crawl into bed. He dies on February 18. The Pope wants to have him buried in St. Peter's but Michelangelo's nephew and heir, Leonardo, takes the body back to Florence, where it is buried in Santa Croce. More than a hundred artists attend his funeral.

(😊)(😊)(😊)(😊)(😊)

Architect by Michelangelo

<https://www.michelangelo.org/michelangelo-architect.jsp>

As we have already seen, Michelangelo was a brilliant artist; but he was more: he was a total artist. Two periods of his life were devoted primarily to architectural structures in the two places where he spent his time, Florence and Rome. It was probably not a field where the artist could venture authoritatively. And yet, in keeping with his general vision of art and form, Michelangelo conceived, in his early period, an architecture that bears the imprint of his expressive will; then in his later years in Rome, he realized projects whose spatial conception profoundly changed the art of construction.

Michelangelo's first important architectural project was the facade of the church of San Lorenzo, a commission from Pope Leo X de' Medici, who wanted to honor his family. In a project design competition, the Pope and Cardinal Julius de' Medici chose Michelangelo's design over those presented by the most prominent artists of the time. Baccio d'Angelo, Michelangelo's assistant on this project, build a model based on this design. It was rejected. A new model built by Michelangelo and Pietro Urbano won the Pope's approval two years later; unfortunately, the work was interrupted and was never completed.



St Peter's Basilica

An analysis of successive projects for the facade reveals a progressive simplification of the structure; the pedestal of the pilasters of the upper story is organically linked to the building. On Giuliano da Sangallo's model for the project for the same building, which was inspired by antique monuments, Michelangelo projected the massive attic story on a ground level support of the light columns. In this way, he could create a bold relationship of contrasting energies, of opposite rhythms where the tension of the structure is manifested in the classic appearance of the whole.

This first project was conceived by a sculptor. The ten figures of the facade were to be placed at the intersections between the verticals and horizontals. It is likely that Michelangelo's first commissions, consisting of ornamenting structures already built, facilitated the possibility of breaking the classic, organic harmony between the internal structure of buildings and their faithful reproduction on the facade. Thus, he was the first to conceive of the independence between the interior and exterior, believing the exterior to have a public ornamental function.



Porta Pia Rome

The second important commission given to Michelangelo, following the accession of Clement VII de' Medici to the papal throne, concerned the erection of the Laurentian Library adjacent to the Cloister of San Lorenzo. The year 1524 was devoted to the preparatory studies. From August 1524 to 1534, Michelangelo supervised the work. The Library was finished in 1560 by Ammannati.

As functional architecture, the Library breaks with the only model of religious or official structures, which was revolutionary for the time. A place for retreat and meditation, which would also serve to house the collections of manuscripts and books of the Medici family, the Laurentian Library is above all, in Michelangelo's conception, a spiritual space. The entrance vestibule is conceived as a meditation between the exterior and interior, which prepares the visitor for the austerity of the reference rooms. According to his general principle, Michelangelo applied his sense of the organic interdependence of the parts to the whole in his architecture. The reading room, immense in width, has bays of desks on the two sides of a central corridor. The walls are composed of pilasters whose restraint contributes to the impression of the room's austerity. Between the pilasters, there are frames without ornamentation. This austere architecture, sometimes judged monotonous,

corresponds, in fact, to Michelangelo's concern to free the spirit of the place reserved for meditation.



Porta Pia Rome

The absence of decorative elements, except for the ceiling, which is ornamented with antique motifs, is a complete departure from all the Florentine principles of construction, but will soon become a model repeated in the erection of public buildings of the Cinquecento.

The staircase at the entrance of the library is in itself a remarkable piece. Here, Michelangelo breaks with the purely functional aspect of that element to incorporate it as an entirely separate architectural piece in the imposing volume of the vestibule, which at the same time is reduced to serving as a stairwell. This monumental staircase, which will later serve as a model in baroque architecture, is composed of a series of steps divided by two banisters in the center. Two angular lateral staircases surround the central staircase of convex steps. The landings of the lateral staircases open at a right angle onto the central staircase, which seems to be an architectural aberration, where only the ornamental intent guided the master. The three staircases lead to the same center door at the top of a central axis.



Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri

Besides the construction of this prestigious building, Michelangelo was to realize or plan architectural works of lesser importance. Thus, in 1532, Clement VII asked the artist to work on a gallery destined for the preservation of the relics for the church of San Lorenzo, and as we have seen, Michelangelo was for a time occupied with the realization of Florentine fortifications against the risk of invasion.

These fortifications change from top to bottom the data for these specific constructions as we restore the plans preserved at the Casa Buonarroti. For the first time, the builder thinks as much about defense as offense, from the interior towards the exterior, achieved by spaces with a clear view, placed between the bastions in the form of pliers or claws which enclose the uncovered areas. As de Tolnay noted, the plans for the fortifications would have a decided influence on one of the greatest architects of strategic construction, Vauban.



Palazzo Farnese

During a period of about twenty years, Michelangelo ceased all activity of an architectural nature to devote himself to numerous commissions for sculpting and painting; yet from 1546 to the end of his days architecture occupied more and more of his attention. Despite their autonomy and their true originality, the architectural conceptions of Michelangelo were linked in the early period to the heritage of Giuliano da Sangallo and in the second period of those of Antonio da Sangallo, the Younger, a number of whose works, Michelangelo would finish. The two major works that would mobilize all the attention of the artist's old age concerned the commissions of Paul III, who wanted to establish Roman supremacy by the reconstructions of St. Peter's and the Campidoglio. Of course, these projects were finished after the artist's death, but the numerous preserved plans and sketches prove that they were completed in accordance with the architect's wishes.

The splendor occasioned by the visit of Charles V to the Eternal City anticipated the replanning of the Piazza Campidoglio. Because of a lack of finances, it was not until 1539 that the Senate, following the will of Paul III, appropriated the first funds for the construction, whose care was soon entrusted to Michelangelo. The first problem was to create harmony and an

organic place between the two buildings, the Palazzo Senatorio and the Palazzo Conservatori, from different aspects around the antique equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, placed in the center of the Piazza from 1538, and whose pedestal Michelangelo reshaped in an oval to lighten the statue itself and then to harmonize it with the new oval plans for the Piazza. Michelangelo's first concern was to plan the unification of the facades, to make them symmetrical, by creating a new building, which would close the Piazza, the fourth side consisting of a staircase, assuring passage between the Campidoglio and the city. The general plan of the Piazza is composed of a central oval representing the caput mundi surrounded by an open base ; trapezoid with the balustrade of the staircase. Here is an extraordinary theatricalization of the space, consisting of a center towards which the star shaped design of the Piazza converges. The facades of the Palaces represent the tension of embedded monumental forces. Horizontals and verticals fit together violently in the form of Ionic columns and Corinthian pilasters that give an age-old character to the whole of the setting.



Sagrestia Nuova

The reconstruction of St. Peter's had already been envisaged by Julius II; a contest was then organized, and Michelangelo's rival, Bramante, emerged the victor.

Before his death, Bramante only realized the beginnings of the construction

and Raphael succeeded him, proposing new plans. Upon his death, Antonio da Sangallo, the Younger, assumed the direction of the work, as chief architect. In 1546, he died and Michelangelo became the master of Roman architecture and resumed Bramante's initial plan. Around four central interior columns, Michelangelo created a simple structure in the form of a Greek cross, as Bramante had planned, but simplifying the different successive projects of his predecessors. The central structure is in the shape of a square, open on one side to form a portico of six columns supporting a triangular pediment. Michelangelo had studied the model of the cupola of the Duomo in Florence from which he conceived the soaring dome that overhangs the structure. Faithful to its traditional conception, Michelangelo, for this church, the greatest in all Christianity, created a bond of contradictory forces linked together in the unity of the symbolic heightening of the dome. While a building of small proportions had already been constructed by Antonio da Sangallo, the Younger, Paul III declared a competition open to the greatest architects of the time for the construction of the largest private palace in Rome, the Palazzo Farnese, for the Pope's son, Pier Luigi Farnese. Michelangelo won the commission. It is recognized today that the part attributed to Buonarroti is relatively modest, Sangallo's plans having prevailed. However, Michelangelo constructed the cornice of the building and it is remarkable. At its summit it accentuates the whole of the building and unifies it like a frame that contains the structure. In the center of the building, the first floor, the work of Sangallo, is broken by a balustrade that dominates the door of the building. This addition by Michelangelo, as well as the coat of arms over the center window, adds some life to the facade, which is relatively austere. The Palazzo Farnese completed, Michelangelo, near the end of his life, realized several more building plans, such as the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, a religious structure which was supposed to be built between the Via Giulia and the Tiber, in the heart of the Florentine quarter of Rome. Plans have also survived for the conversion of the Diocletian Baths into a church called Santa Maria degli Angeli. Sketches by the master concerning the commission for the Sforza Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore, and the Porta Pia have also been preserved. The architectural work of Michelangelo cannot be separated from the entirety of his artistic problematics. In the same way, two fundamental lines are apparent, which inscribe the artist's own genius in this field. First, his capacity to synthesize elements borrowed from the past, then, his will to produce a powerful work. Forceful and massive architecture, Michelangelo's construction is symbolic; each element is significant in its totality and the direction of a spiritual and cosmic project.



Quotable QUOTES

<https://www.michelangelo.org/michelangelo-quotes.jsp>

Genius is eternal patience. "

- Michelangelo

Faith in oneself is the best and safest course. "

- Michelangelo

A man paints with his brains and not with his hands. "

- Michelangelo

Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it. "

- Michelangelo

If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn't seem so wonderful at all. "

- Michelangelo

Every beauty which is seen here by persons of perception resembles more than anything else that celestial source from which we all are come. "

- Michelangelo

There is no greater harm than that of time wasted. "

- Michelangelo

Many believe - and I believe - that I have been designated for this work by God. In spite of my old age, I do not want to give it up; I work out of love for God and I put all my hope in Him. "

- Michelangelo

My soul can find no staircase to Heaven unless it be through Earth's loveliness. "

- Michelangelo

I am a poor man and of little worth, who is laboring in that art that God has given me in order to extend my life as long as possible."

- Michelangelo

Lord, grant that I may always desire more than I can accomplish."

- Michelangelo

The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection. "

- Michelangelo

I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free. "

- Michelangelo

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark. "

- Michelangelo

Lord, grant that I may always desire more than I can accomplish."

- Michelangelo

If in my youth I had realized that the sustaining splendour of beauty of with which I was in love would one day flood back into my heart, there to ignite a flame that would torture me without end, how gladly would I have put out the light in my eyes. "

- Michelangelo

The promises of this world are, for the most part, vain phantoms; and to confide in one's self, and become something of worth and value is the best and safest course. "

- Michelangelo

The marble not yet carved can hold the form of every thought the greatest artist has. "

- Michelangelo

Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle. "

- Michelangelo

A beautiful thing never gives so much pain as does failing to hear and see it. "

- Michelangelo

It is necessary to keep one's compass in one's eyes and not in the hand, for the hands execute, but the eye judges. "

- Michelangelo

I live and love in God's peculiar light. "

- Michelangelo

Death and love are the two wings that bear the good man to heaven. "

- Michelangelo

The best of artists has no conception that the marble alone does not contain within itself. "

- Michelangelo

It is well with me only when I have a chisel in my hand. "

- Michelangelo

From such a gentle thing, from such a fountain of all delight, my every pain is born. "

- Michelangelo

TEF Interesting Facts

<https://www.michelangelo.org/michelangelo-facts.jsp>

1. Michelangelo first rose to prominence after a failed attempt at art fraud.

In 1496, Michelangelo made a sleeping cupid figure and treated it with acidic earth to make it seem ancient. He then sold it to a dealer, Baldassare del Milanese, who in turn sold it to Cardinal Riario of San Giorgio. Riario later heard rumors of the scam and got his money back, but he was so impressed by Michelangelo's skill that he invited him to Rome for a meeting. The young sculptor would linger in the Eternal City for the next several years, eventually winning a commission to carve the [Pieta](#), the work that first made his name as an artist.

2. Pieta was the only work Michelangelo ever signed

According to Michelangelo's contemporary and biographer, Giorgio Vasari, shortly after the installation of his [Pieta](#), Michelangelo overheard someone

remarked that it was the work of another sculptor, Cristoforo Solari, whereupon Michelangelo signed the sculpture. Michelangelo carved MICHAELA[N]GELUS BONAROTUS FLORENTIN[US] FACIEBA[T] (Michelangelo Buonarroti, Florentine, was making this) on the sash running across Mary's chest. It was the only work he ever signed. Vasari also reports the anecdote that Michelangelo later regretted his outburst of pride and swore never to sign another work of his hands.

3. Michelangelo Disliked Leonardo da Vinci

Michelangelo and [Leonardo da Vinci](#) felt "an intense dislike for each other," says their biographer Vasari. Michelangelo and Leonardo stood out as strong and mighty-personalities with two irreconcilably opposed attitudes to art. Their fierce independence led to clashes whenever circumstances brought them face-to-face. One day, Leonardo da Vinci was passing through the Piazza Santa Trinita in Florence. Some gentlemen were debating Dante in front of the Spini family palace. They called Leonardo over and asked him to explain the passage they were puzzling over, but just at that moment Michelangelo happened to come along and Leonardo instead suggested that the sculptor elucidate it. This proposal annoyed Michelangelo. Instead of discoursing on Dante, he addressed Leonardo in the disrespectful "tu" form, and snapped back, "You explain it yourself, you who made the design of a horse to be cast in bronze, but who was unable to cast it." With that, he strode away, leaving Leonardo standing there, "made red in the face by his words".

4. Michelangelo carved the "David" from a discarded block of marble.

[David](#), the astonishing Renaissance sculpture was created between 1501 and 1504. In 1501, Michelangelo was only 26 years old, but he was already the most famous and best paid artist in his days. *David* was originally commissioned by the Opera del Duomo for the Cathedral of Florence. The project begun in 1464 by Agostino di Duccio and later carried on by Antonio Rossellino in 1475. Both sculptors had in the end rejected an enormous block of marble due to the presence of too many "taroli", or imperfections, which may have threatened the stability of such a huge statue. This block of marble of exceptional dimensions remained therefore neglected for 25 years. When he started, Michelangelo had almost mystic believe that the figure he carved already existed fully formed within the block of stone that was badly damaged by earlier artists. By studying the raw marble, examining the pattern, he could sense where the figure stood. Then layer by layer, blower by blower, after four years of hard labor, he liberated from this rocky prison his creation - the magnificent statue of *David*.

5. Michelangelo was vengeful

During the time Michelangelo worked on his masterwork The Last Judgement, pope Paul III went to visit the Sistine with his entourage of prelates. Among them was the pope's Master of Ceremonies, Biagio da Cesena, who was absolutely scandalized by the great quantity of naked figures and strongly protested, affirming that a fresco of that kind didn't deserve anything more than the wall of a bar.

Michelangelo responded by painting Biagio da Cesena into Hell, as Minos, judge of the souls, with two huge asses ears and a serpent intent on nibbling his genitals. When the Master of Ceremonies resentfully complained, the pope responded by saying that his jurisdiction unfortunately didn't cover Hell.

6. Michelangelo painted his Self Portrait in 'The Last Judgement' of the Sistine Chapel



The Last Judgement by Michelangelo covers the wall behind the altar in the Sistine Chapel. The work depicts the second coming of Christ and, although the artist is clearly inspired by the Bible, it is his own imaginative vision that prevails in this painting. Saint Bartholomew, one of the apostles features rather uniquely within the composition of the Last Judgement. Saint Bartholomew in fact holds the skin of what we believe is a self portrait of Michelangelo himself. In the portion of the fresco Michelangelo references some of the heinous ways martyrs were slayed, also referencing Bartholomew being skinned alive.

7. Michelangelo was also a prolific poet

Throughout his life, Michelangelo wrote over 300 poems. Many of his most impressive sonnets were written to his close friend Vittoria Colonna. Many incorporate the philosophy of Neo-Platonism - that a human soul, powered by love and ecstasy, can reunite with an almighty God.

8. Michelangelo was the wealthiest artists of his time

Although Michelangelo was known to be reasonably well off, new research suggests that he was fabulously wealthy. Michelangelo was well paid by Pope Julius II, one of his great patrons, and he also invested widely and successfully in property. Michelangelo's riches would have made him one of the wealthiest artists of his time, putting him in a category that was streets ahead of Leonardo da Vinci, [Titian](#) or [Raphael](#). When he passed away, Michelangelo left an estate worth 50,000 florins - about \$50 million in today's money.

9. Michelangelo lived for 89 years - an unusually long lifespan for a man of his era

In 1557, Michelangelo had been forced to leave Rome due to the threat of invasion by Spain; he spent several of the last years of his life traveling in much the same way as he had started his adult years. He returned to Rome after the thread had passed. Michelangelo died after a short illness in 1564 at 89, surviving far past the usual life expectancy of the era. He was buried at the church of Saint Apostoli in a huge formal ceremony.

10. Michelangelo was the first western artist whose biography was published while he was alive.

Two biographies were published of him during his lifetime; one of them, by Giorgio Vasari, proposed that he was the pinnacle of all artistic achievement since the beginning of the Renaissance, a viewpoint that continued to have currency in art history for centuries.



David: By Michelangelo



TEN Secrets of Statue of David by Michelangelo

1. Michelangelo's David is massive at 17 feet tall and more than 12,000 pounds, yet it is sculpted from a single block of white marble.
2. The block of marble that Michelangelo used to carve "David" had been worked on more than 50 years earlier by Donatello. At that time the marble was said to have had a flaw in it and the project was abandoned.
3. Michelangelo broke with artistic tradition by portraying David before his battle with Goliath rather than afterwards as seen in representations by Caravaggio and Donatello.
4. Unruly protesters flung a chair that broke the statue's left arm in three spots during an uprising in 1527.
5. In 1857, reigning Queen Victoria was so taken aback by the nudity of a replica David statue that she ordered a plaster fig leaf to be cast to cover his genitals before he went on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.
6. Although it has remained in Florence for over 500 years, the Italian government recently asked the courts to decide whether the city or the country owns the David.
7. Michelangelo exaggerated the size of David's right hand. Some believe it is a reference to a nickname for the biblical David, which means "strong of hand."
8. That David's eyes are flawed went unnoticed for centuries, perhaps due to the statues' extreme height. However, the 20th-century Digital Michelangelo Project at Stanford University rendered complete images of the statue which revealed that the David's left eye gazes forward while the right eye is focused on some distant spot.
9. In 1873, officials decided to move the David indoors to the Galleria dell'Accademia to protect it from the weather. However, the statue is now suffering from stress fractures caused by the vibrations of scores of tourists filing past.
10. Moving the statue from Michelangelo's studio to the Palazzo Vecchio took forty men and four days, even though the distance was less than a mile.

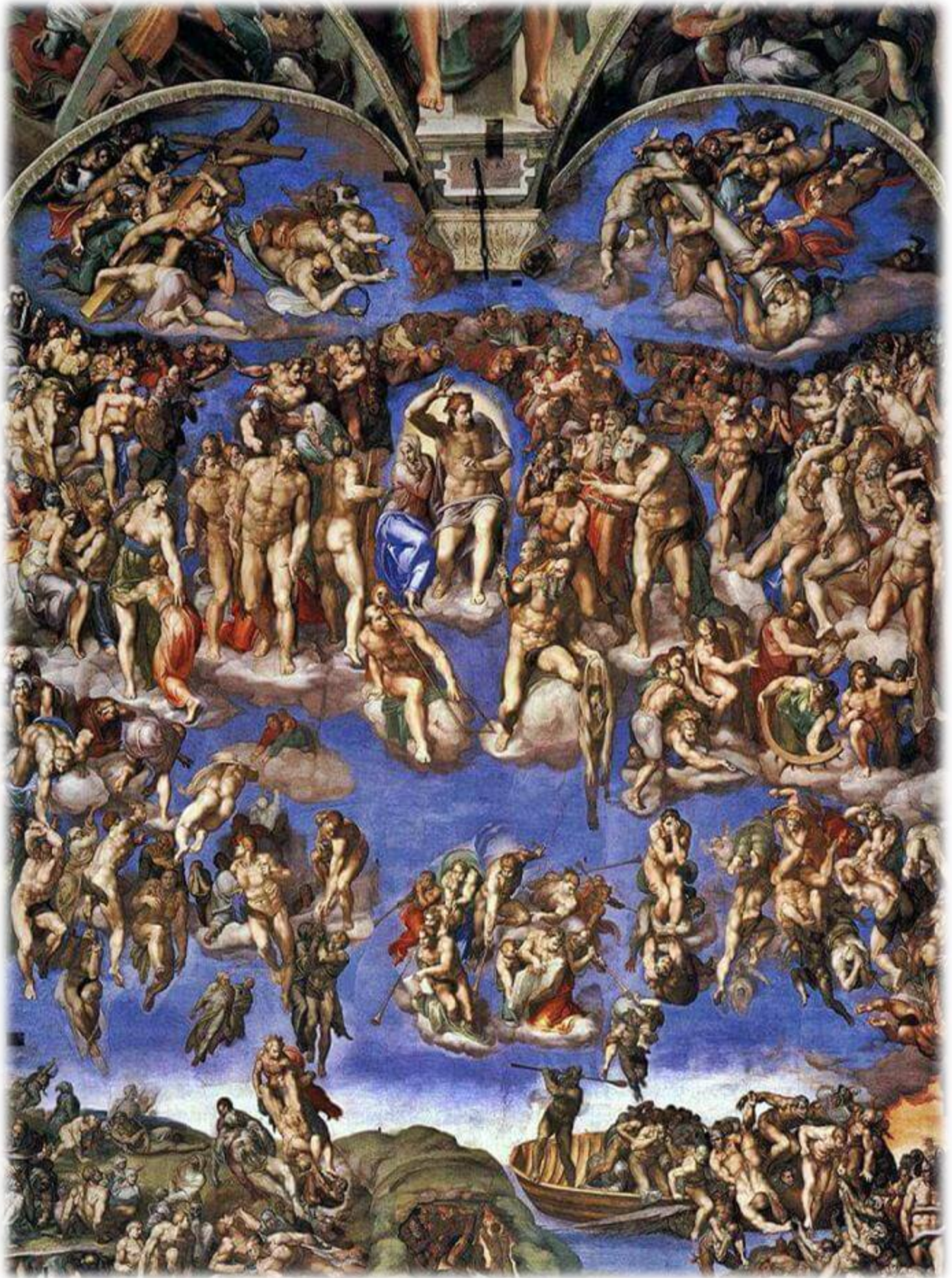
Moses: By Michelangelo



Twice life-sized, the Moses is a unique masterpiece of Renaissance statuary and art in general. It is believed that Michelangelo was alluding to this very same statue when he wrote, on 16 June 1515, "I have to work very hard this summer to finish this work quickly". The truth of the matter is that the statue remained in the room in Via Macel de' Corvi for almost thirty years, until it was installed in the church between 1542 and 1545, where it became the fulcrum of the monument to Julius II, a rather reduced version as compared to the original project. Most of the work was carved to a finished state, although some of the less visible parts, such as the neck, the back of the head and the seat, are rough.

Moses is seated, clad in a tunic, leggings and sandals alluding to biblical antiquity, and his legs are wrapped in a heavy cloak that cascades down to fill the space between his knees. His right foot is firmly set forwards on the ground, while his left foot is retracted and precariously balanced on the edge of the sculpture plinth; the pose is unstable perhaps to suggest that the figure is about to rise. With the torso in a frontal position the head sharply turns to look left. Both hands are occupied with the flowing, wavy ropes of Moses' long beard: the left-hand grabs at the ends of the curls, the right moves the central mass over as if caught in it, at the same time holding still up against his side the two tablets of the Ten Commandments.

The Last Judgement: By Michelangelo



TEN Secrets of The Last Judgement by Michelangelo

1. Art historians generally agree that Michelangelo included his own self-portrait in his busy "The Last Judgement" fresco, pointing to the skin held by St. Bartholomew, which they believe has the artist's face. St. Bartholomew was one of Jesus' 12 disciples. On his later travels as a missionary, he was flayed alive.
2. In keeping with the precedent set by earlier Renaissance artists, Michelangelo included figures from Greek mythology in his Christian-inspired "The Last Judgement". Such mythic figures as Charon, who rowed souls down the river Styx to Hades and Minos of Crete, who served as one of a trio of judges in Hades, according to Dante's "Inferno," share wall space with the likes of Jesus, Mary, saints and angels.
3. One legend surrounding the fresco says that the artist portrayed Biagio de Cesena as a serpent-wrapped Minos after the Vatican dignitary vocally criticized the unfinished painting. Because it contained mostly nude figures, Cesena claimed "The Last Judgement" was more fit for a tavern than the Sistine Chapel. Interestingly, recent cleaning of the fresco reveals a serpent biting Minos' genitals.
4. Just a few weeks prior to Michelangelo's death, scandalized churchmen at the Council of Trent agreed to engage artist Daniele da Volterra to add clothing to the nude figures in Michelangelo's fresco.
5. Approximately 25,000 people per day currently view "The Last Judgement" in the Sistine Chapel.
6. "The Last Judgement" was massive, measuring approximately 39 feet by 45 feet. In comparison, "The Last Supper" fresco by Leonardo da Vinci was approximately 15 feet by 29 feet.
7. Some of the ways Michelangelo took artistic license with the biblical story include his beardless Christ, the omission of Christ's throne and his host of wingless angels. In fact, just after the artist's death, Giovanni Andrea Gillio collected all Michelangelo's departures from the biblical tradition in a book entitled "Due Dialogi."
8. Other existing artworks had to be demolished to make way for "The Last Judgement," including "The Assumption of Mary" by Renaissance artist Pietro Perugino and two of Michelangelo's own earlier works, the "Ancestors of Christ" lunettes. Portions of Perugino's Moses and "Adoration of the Kings" cycles were also covered by the fresco.
9. The descending figures in "The Last Judgement" may correspond to the seven deadly sins, according to one school of thought. For example, one tumbling figure carries keys and coins, representing greed.
10. The golden aura surrounding Christ and Mary at the center of the fresco may be a reference to Apollo, Greek god of the sun, and Christ's rotating arms suggest the circular motion of the heavens as well as the cycle of life, death, and resurrection.

The Fall of Man: By Michelangelo



The Fall of Man, by Michelangelo

The Temptation and Expulsion had always been depicted separately before. Michelangelo has united them with the gigantic tree that almost fills the scene from side to side, and reflects the shape of the Rovere tree in the reliefs adorning the barrier below. In one overarching shape the crime leads to its punishment. The tempting Satan and the avenging angel function as branches. Recalling Joel's prophecy of the destruction of vine and fig tree, the stump of a withered vine is to be seen behind Eve, and the Tree of Knowledge bears fig leaves and figs, both having strong sexual significance. On the right its shape is continued by the angel's arm and sword and by the Rovere leaves and acorns which invade the scene from the cornucopia held by the youth just outside. The tree that challenges heaven is a fig tree when it represents the Tree of Knowledge which brought mankind to destruction, an oak when it symbolizes the Tree of Life and the punishment of the guilty.

The putto behind Isaiah directs his attention to the Fall of Man. Isaiah had sung of the vineyard of the beloved that brought forth only wild grapes; the Lord devastated it and broke down the fence of stones. To St. Jerome the beloved signified Israel, the vineyard Christ. The vineyard was sacrificed, the Old Law destroyed. The stones remain in Michelangelo's background, and the dead branches suggest the Cross, as in the Creation of Eve. To reinforce the connection between Eve and the vineyard, Michelangelo has given her the pose of the woman in [The Deluge](#) who crouches over the wine keg.

The Deposition: By Michelangelo



The Deposition, by Michelangelo

Michelangelo worked on **The Deposition** intermittently for seven years. He carved it for his family tomb as a fitting memorial for himself and the family he loved so well. By 1547 he was 70 years old and the knowledge of his own mortality was evidently important in this work. The sculpture is housed in the Museo dell' Opera del Duomo in Florence.

The man at the back supporting the body of Christ is Nicodemus, who was a follower of Jesus and, together with Joseph, helped take down his body from the cross. He was also a sculptor who carved the visions that God sent him; poignantly Michelangelo has given Nicodemus his own features.

After the demonstrative eloquence of his maturity renouncing the demiurge for the monumental, Michelangelo, devoted the last years of his life to the execution of statues, seemingly unfinished, yet the most moving of all his works in which the artist concentrated the highest spiritual fervor. If he was depressed all his life, his last years, shown in the moral disposition of the poems, are years of profound melancholy. Michelangelo fluctuated between the act of pure devotion and the despair of being abandoned by God under the weight of his sins. If architecture and poetry seemed to absorb his attention in his last years, Michelangelo still remained most faithful to his vocation as a sculptor.

FIVE Michelangelo Paintings

1. The Torment of Saint Anthony



The Torment of Saint Anthony, circa 1487 © Kimbell Art Museum

Although probably not one of his best known works, this piece entitled *The Torment of Saint Anthony* is crucial in the development of the great master's career. Indeed, it is his first **painting**, done when he was 12 or 13 years old, circa 1487. At the time, the young Michelangelo was practicing in the studio of Domenico Ghirlandaio, a famous painter of the Florentine school. Legend has it that Michelangelo was going to observe the fish stalls in the market in order to faithfully transcribe their colored scales onto the infernal beings! The work, a reproduction of an engraving by German artist Martin Schongauer, earned him an important reputation - it was the first to reach an American collection.

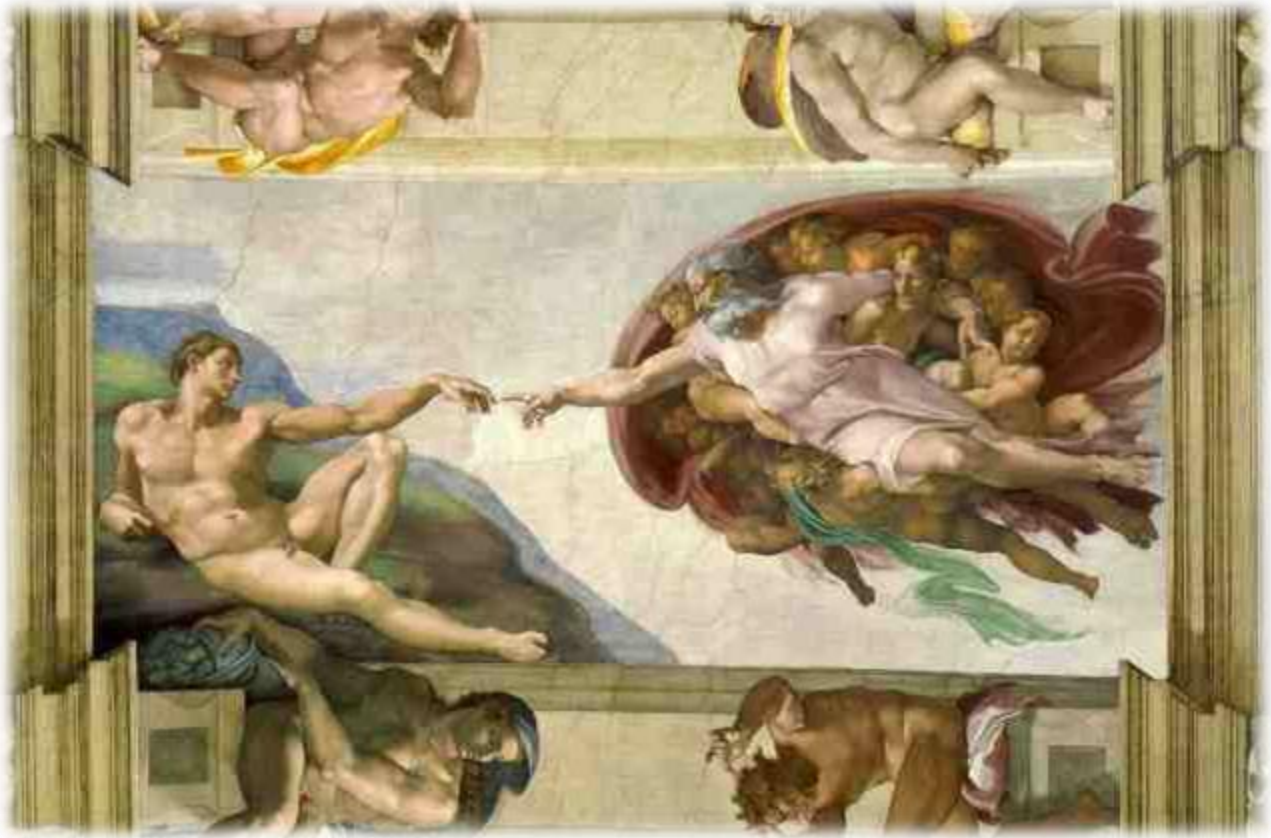
2. *Dono Tondi*



Dono Tondi, 1506-1507

Michelangelo painted *Dono Tondi* (or *Doni Madonna*) only a few years after completing two of his most-famous works, *Pietà* and *David*. This circular painting was made using both oil and tempera, a technique that was also used by *Sandro Botticelli* for *The Birth of Venus*. *Dono Tondi* was commissioned by a wealthy Florentine named Agnolo Doni, who bought it on the occasion of his marriage to Maddalena, herself from a noble Tuscan family. This painting of 120 cm in diameter has striking specificities. First, its circular shape referring to the idea of perfection. Then, its iridescent colors. Finally, its pyramidal composition symbolizing the stability, the Holy Trinity. The exaggerated postures of the subjects are said to have inspired the Mannerist style, which emerged in Italy in the 1520s. The painting has been in the Uffizi Gallery since 1635, and is the only work by the master on display in Florence.

3. The Creation of Adam



The Creation of Adam, 1508-1512

How can you list Michelangelo's most famous paintings without mentioning *The Creation of Adam*? The work, commissioned by Pope Julius II, is part of a monumental fresco divided into 9 distinct panels, and covering the entire ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Inspired by biblical scenes taken from the book of Genesis, the episode represented is undoubtedly the most significant of the series, as evidenced by the many tributes and reproductions of which it is the subject. God gives life to the first man by almost touching Adam's index finger. This image, certainly the most sacred in the history of Western art, symbolizes humanity. And while Michelangelo, the sculptor of all sculptors, hesitated for a long time before taking on the project. Pretty funny knowing that *The Creation of Adam* is nowadays admired by about five million people every year in the Sistine Chapel!

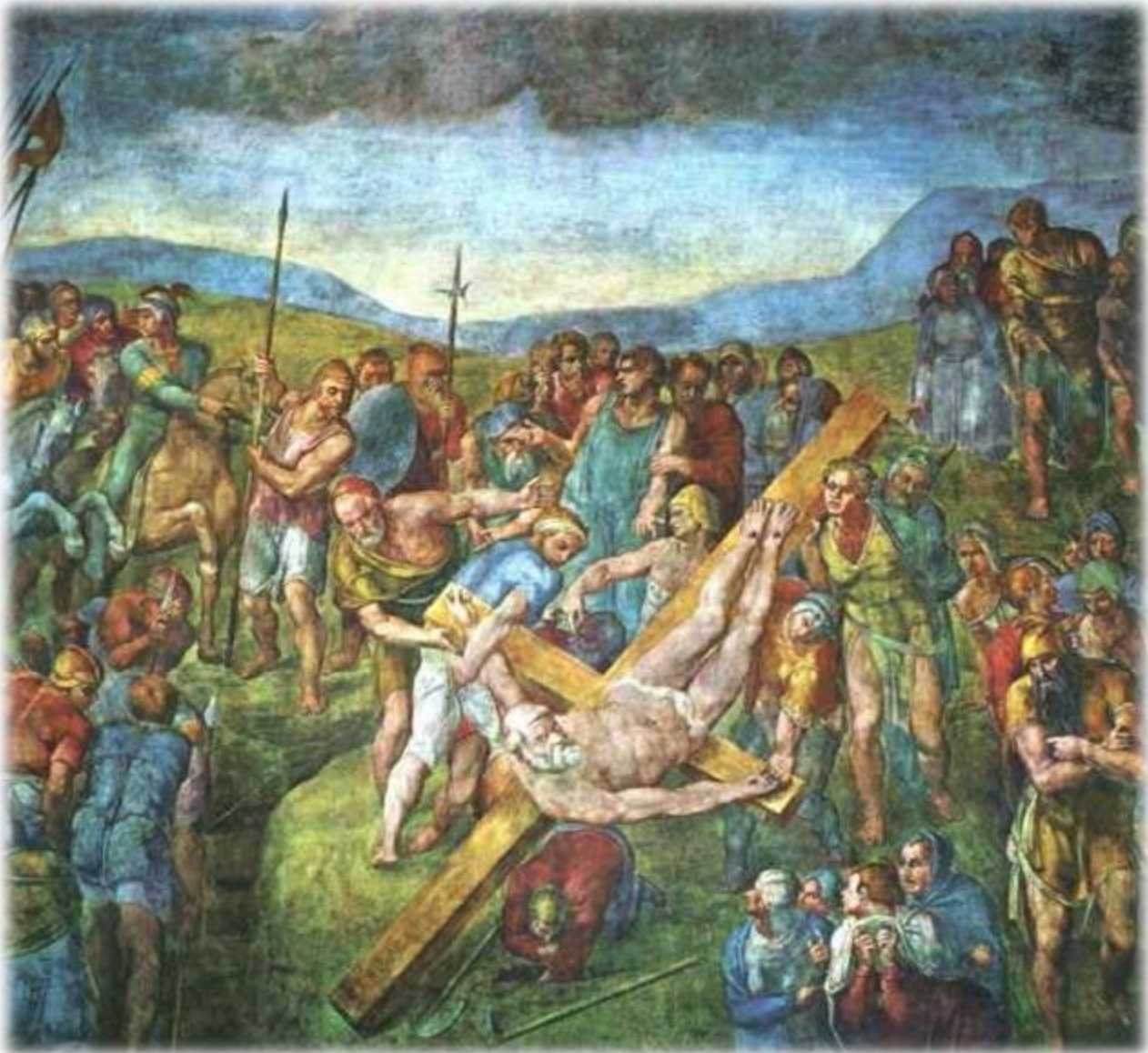
4. The Last Judgment



The Last Judgment, 1536-1541

This mural is one of the greatest masterpieces of Western art. Commissioned by Pope Clement VII, the immense fresco stands above the altar of the Sistine Chapel. It was 25 years after completing its ceiling that Michelangelo embarked on the realization of the fresco. He finished it at the age of 67. The work, although exceptional, divides. It is criticized for its general composition, but also for its characters with overly muscular and naked bodies. The genitals represented were covered with draperies by the Mannerist Daniele da Volterra after the death of Michelangelo. Struck by censorship, this one-of-a-kind painting depicting a dramatically intense scene constitutes a turning point in the history of art. Indeed, it marks the passage from Humanism to the new era.

5. The Crucifixion of St. Peter



The Crucifixion of St. Peter, 1546-1550

Michelangelo's last fresco painted during his lifetime, *The Crucifixion of St. Peter* was commissioned by Pope Paul III in 1541. Located in the Pauline Chapel of the Vatican Palace, it depicts a tragic scene, namely the crucifixion of the saint by soldiers of the Roman Empire. At the time, the exaggerated dimensions of this painting created a scandal. However, these unusual proportions were deliberate, so that when the observer on the ground looked up, they saw the images in the correct dimensions. Michelangelo was known for his ego. He has supposedly represented himself wearing a blue turban in the upper left corner of the painting!

In conclusion, the multidisciplinary artist is a legend of art history. Each of his works transcribes his desire to reject tradition. In his frescoes, so precise that they look like sculptures, the characters embody power and elegance. The influence of the Florentine genius is simply inestimable, as his work is so colossal. During his lifetime, the artist also engaged in architecture, urbanism and poetry. He surrounded himself with the most illustrious patrons in order to create pieces that are still revered today!

Kindly visit these Web Links to see the Videos

01] The 10 Most Famous Works of Art by Michelangelo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1T-HtY5g9k> [28:29]

02] Michelangelo - The Giant of Art

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CfmrAYOxDQ> [1:44:30]

03] Michelangelo Explained: From Pietà to the Sistine Chapel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioVNFqQ5Zlg> [20:28]

04] The Art and Drama of Michelangelo's Last Decades

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSIAde47pXQ> [26:19]

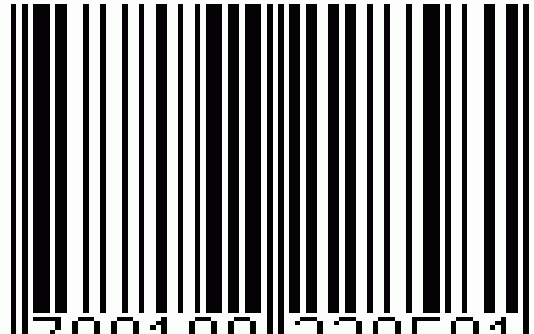
05] Michelangelo Technique with Egg Tempera

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVug2M95NAY> [48:49]

06] Michelangelo's Italy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcENr29rZr0> [57:20]

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